Draft Environmental Assessment

Lower Flathead River Proposed Fishing Access Site Acquisition



July 15, 2005



Lower Flathead River Proposed Fishing Access Site Acquisition Draft Environmental Assessment MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

Type of proposed action:

Development

	Renovation Maintenance Land Acquisition Equipment Acquisition Other (Describe)	
2.	Legislature enacted Statute 87-Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) to accesses. The legislature that this function would be accessed 23-1-106, 15-1-122, 61-3-321, collection of fees and charges to	cosed action: The 1977 Montana 1-1-605 MCA, which directs Montana Fish, quire, develop, and operate a system of the established a funding account to ensure complished. Sections 12-8-213, 23-1-105, and 87-1-303, MCA, authorize the for the use of state park system units and in rule-making authority for their use,
	in 12.8.604 (ARM) (1) relate to site features or use patterns. T	se Bill 495, and the guidelines established changes in state park and fishing access he proposed acquisition will not change herefore, Section 23-1-110 MCA is not

3. Name of project:

1.

Lower Flathead River Fishing Access Site Acquisition

4. Name, address, and phone number of project sponsor:

Allan Kuser Fishing Access Site Coordinator Montana FWP, HQ PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620 406-444-7885 Jim Vashro Regional Fisheries Manager Montana FWP, Region 1 490 North Meridian Road Kalispell, MT 59901 406-751-4550

initiated by the proposed fishing access site acquisition. See Appendix 1.

5. If applicable:

Estimated construction/commencement date: N/A
Estimated completion date: N/A
Current status of project design (% complete): N/A

6. Location affected by proposed action (county, range, and township):

The Lower Flathead River Fishing Access Site (FAS) is located in Section 6, Township 18 North, Range 24 West, Sanders County, Montana. The proposed acquisition is 2.08 acres.

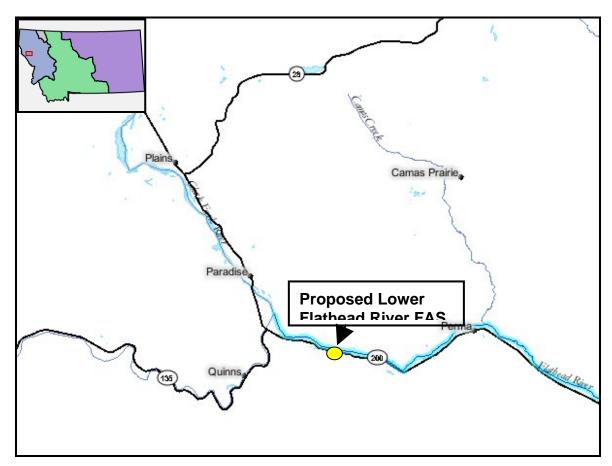


Figure 1: Yellow circle delineates location of Lower Flathead River FAS.

7.	Project	Size:	Estimate	the	number	of	acres	that	would	be	directly	affected
that a	re currer	ntly:										

(a)	Developed:	(d)	Floodplain <u>2.08</u>	acres
. ,	Residential 0 acres		·	
	Industrial <u>0</u> acres	(e)	Productive:	
			Irrigated cropland 0	acres
(b)	Open Space/Woodlands/		Dry cropland 0	acres
. ,	Recreation 2.08 acres		Forestry <u>0</u>	acres
			Rangeland <u>0</u>	acres
(c)	Wetlands/Riparian		Other <u>0</u>	acres
	Areas <u>0</u> acres			

8. Map/site plan: attach an original $8\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

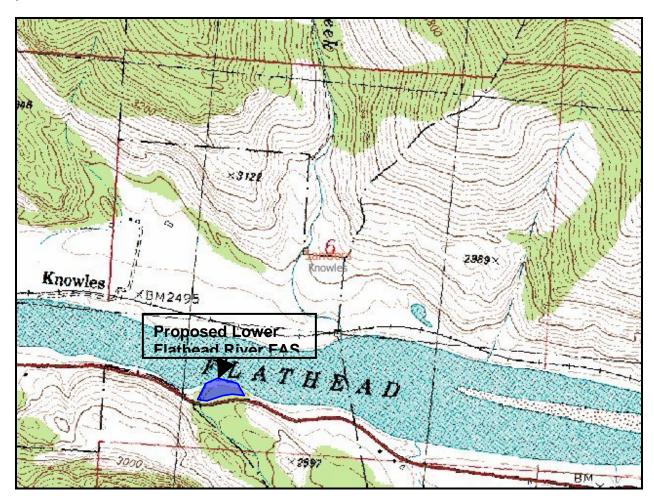


Figure 2: Topographic map depicting approximate boundaries (blue polygon; 2.08 acres) of MFWP proposed acquisition of the Howe property (Lower Flathead River FAS; base photo source: Montana Natural Resources Information Service Topofinder II).



Figure 3: Arial photograph depicting approximate boundaries (blue polygon; 2.08 acres) of MFWP proposed acquisition of the Howe property (Lower Flathead River FAS; base photo source: Montana Natural Resources Information Service Topofinder II).

9. Listing of any other local, state or federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction:

(a)	Agency Name Permit	Date Filed/#	
(b)	Funding:		
	Agency Name	Funding Amount	
	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	G	
	Fishing Access Acquisition Fund	\$170,000	
(c)	Other Overlapping or Additional Ju	•	
	Agency Name	Type of Responsibility	

10. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:

Proposed Lower Flathead River FAS Description and Background

The proposed FAS is located approximately 5 miles southeast of Paradise on HWY 200, or 3.9 river miles upstream of the Flathead River and the Clark Fork River confluence. The proposed FAS is approximately 2.08 acres. At the site, there is an undeveloped boat launch on the Flathead River (Figure 4), there is a small parallel parking area (Figure 5), and there are two entrances from the highway (Figure 6). The sight distance for the east entrance is short due to the curvature of the highway (Figure 7). Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT) is planning a highway project for Highway 200, and it is likely the

entrances to this site will change as a result of the MDOT work. The site contains numerous ponderosa pine trees. There is some spotted knapweed (5% coverage) located at the site.

Many fish and wildlife species utilize or are near the proposed FAS, including some species of concern (e.g., bull trout, peregrine falcon, bald eagle, wolverine, and lynx). Bull trout use the Flathead River solely as a migration corridor between rearing grounds and spawning grounds. Juvenile and adult bull trout would not use the lower portion of the Flathead River as temperatures are too warm in the summer. Bull trout would not be



Figure 4: Boat launch at proposed FAS.



Figure 5: East entrance and parallel parking area to proposed FAS.

impacted by purchasing this property as catching a bull trout in the Lower Flathead River is highly unlikely and no habitat will be altered by this purchase. There is a peregrine falcon nest immediately downstream of the proposed FAS on the north side of the river. There will be no impact on the nesting pair with the acquisition of this property. In a future EA, should development at the FAS occur, MFWP will consider impacts on this nest. Bald eagles occur in the area of the proposed FAS. The nearest nest is approximately 3.5 map miles (straight line distance). There will be no impacts on this nest, or on bald eagle habitat, with the purchase of this property. Wolverine and lynx are typically upper elevation species, have not been located in the immediate area of the potential FAS, and are not expected to be there. There will be no impact on these species.

Prior to 2003, public access to the Flathead River was allowed via this private launch site. After the site closed, MFWP received numerous inquiries about reestablishing access on the Flathead River. Interest has remained high with recent inquiries from the Montana BASS Federation and the Flathead Chapter of Walleyes Unlimited. In addition, the Eastern Sanders Conservation District specifically asked MFWP to provide public access to the Flathead River. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes also acknowledge the need for public access to the lower Flathead River.

Proposed Action, Purpose and Benefits of the Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to purchase the Howe property using funds from the Fishing Access Acquisition Fund, for the purpose of providing an FAS on the Flathead River.

The proposed FAS is a good access point for fishing the Flathead River. The Flathead River between Kerr Dam and the Clark Fork River confluence (72 river miles) has outstanding northern pike and smallmouth



Figure 6: Two entrances at proposed FAS.



Figure 7: Short sight distance on east side of proposed FAS.

bass fishing. Northern pike have been caught up to 30 pounds. The lower few miles (just downstream of the potential FAS) of the river yielded state record smallmouth bass of 6.34 and 6.4 pounds in 1999 and 2000, respectively. Sixty-eight miles of this stretch of the Flathead River run through the Flathead Indian Reservation. On the Reservation, motorboats are restricted to 15 horsepower motors maximum and are not permitted between March 15 and June 30. The majority of motorboat use occurs on the lower four miles of river (the only stretch not on the Reservation). Floaters will commonly launch at Perma Bridge (located approximately 7 river miles upstream of the potential FAS) or further upstream to float down into the lower section.

River access on the lower Flathead River is a priority for MFWP. The loss of public access via this private access site in 2003 due to a landownership change created much interest in replacing the public access. As stated earlier, angler groups and the Eastern Sanders County Conservation District have requested MFWP to provide public access on the lower portion of the Flathead River. In addition, representatives of The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes also contacted the owners of this property for purchase after MFWP had entered into negotiations. The Tribes see the need for public access on the lower Flathead River, and have deferred to the state to provide this public access.

Acquisition of the property by MFWP would enhance the site by providing public access, managing weed infestations, and providing site control and management.

The Land Acquisition Transaction

Should the land acquisition go forward, MFWP will purchase 2.08 acres of the Howe property.

The MDOT is planning a highway project for Highway 200, adjacent to the proposed FAS. Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act will require MDOT to consider all possible alternative routes before impacting the property, and they must try to use all possible measures to minimize impacts to the recreational and habitat values of the property. If there is no alternative to impacting the property, MDOT will pay MFWP for the impacts, or find alternative property if the road construction impacts are too severe to allow continued public access at this location.

Future Development of the Site

The site would be developed as an FAS. Temporary site control work may be done including installation of a temporary port-a-potty as well as barrier work. Temporary barriers would be installed to restrict off-road vehicle use and to provide safe ingress and egress from the site. No ground disturbance will occur with these activities. Further development may include a designated parking area or boat ramp improvements. A separate EA would be prepared and made available for public comment in advance of the further development. In addition, MFWP will manage noxious weeds on the site in accordance with the Region 1 Weed Management Plan and in concert with the county weed program.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no-action alternative) to the proposed action, whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider, and a comparison of the alternatives with the proposed action/preferred alternative:

Alternative A: No Action

Do not purchase or develop a site on the lower Flathead River. Use of the lower Flathead River will remain low. Access to the lower Flathead River will be through private land or by floating from the Flathead Indian Reservation. Easy access to the north side of the Flathead River would no longer be available as the site would be closed as private property. There will be no public access from the Reservation to the mouth of the Flathead River.

Alternative B: Purchase Alternative Property

Purchasing alternative sites with access on the lower Flathead River have been investigated at five separate locations. At those sites landowners were unwilling to sell, landowners were unwilling to enter into long-term lease agreements, or the sites were unsuitable for boat access.

Alternative C: Purchase the Howe Property

The Howe property would be a prime location for hunters, anglers, and recreationists throughout the year. This location would restore public access to the Flathead River that was lost in 2003. Acquisition of the property by MFWP would enhance public access to the river and provide parking and boat launching opportunities.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

Since this site already exists, soil compaction is already evident. A temporary portapotty would improve current conditions.

Air quality will not change, as the use of the site will be consistent with past uses.

Water quality will not change, as the use of the site will be consistent with past uses.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) found records of Sand Springbeauty *Claytonia arenicola* within one mile of the site. The US Forest Service ranks this vascular plant as sensitive. The plant was located at the Cascade Creek campground and along Robertson Creek.

The Howe property has a minor infestation of spotted knapweed (5% coverage), and the current owners have not had an active weed management program. If MFWP acquires the land, the department would incorporate this property into Region One's weed management program. The FWP Region One Weed Management Plan calls for an integrated method of managing weeds using mechanical, biological, and chemical eradication procedures. Increased use at the site may lead to increased weed infestations; however, the implementation of a weed management program will mitigate this risk. Aquatic weeds are present in Coeur d'Alene, only 125 miles from the site. Signing regarding aquatic weeds and activities to prevent their spread will be posted on-site.

The proposed FAS is a good access point to lands located across the Flathead River. One of the main uses in the fall will be to allow hunters who have permits to hunt bighorn sheep on the north side of the Flathead River. A private property owner has allowed access through his property to hunting district 124 and will likely do so in the future. This hunt allows for either-sex and adult ewe bighorn sheep licenses with a season from mid-September through mid-November.

The MNHP located bull trout *Salvelinus confluentus*, peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus*, North American Wolverine *Gulo gulo luscus*, and Lynx *Lynx canadensis* within one mile of this property. Since the property has historically been used for public access, this action should have no additional impacts on these species. Bull trout use the Flathead River solely as a migration corridor between rearing grounds and spawning grounds. Juvenile and adult bull trout would not use the lower portion of the Flathead River as temperatures are too warm in the summer. Bull trout would not be impacted by this action

as catching a bull trout in the Lower Flathead River is highly unlikely and no habitat will be altered by this purchase. There is a peregrine falcon nest immediately downstream of the proposed FAS on the north side of the river. Since the property has historically been used for public access, this action should provide no additional impacts on the nesting pair. Should further development at the FAS occur, MFWP will consider impacts on this nest in a future EA. Wolverine and lynx are typically upper elevation species, have not been located in the immediate area of the potential FAS, and are not expected to be there. There will be no impact on these species. Bald eagles occur in the area of the proposed FAS. The nearest nest is approximately 3.5 map miles (straight line distance). There will be no impacts on this nest or on bald eagle habitat. Guidelines established in the FWP Bald Eagle Management Plan will be followed.

Public access has historically been available at this site, but with the acquisition by MFWP that access will be formalized. Noise caused by increased recreational use may occur. The purpose of the site is for launching boats. Other recreational uses will be minimal due to the size (2.08 acres) and location of the site. Therefore noise at the site will be minimal and not likely a nuisance to neighbors. Motor boat traffic on the lower portion of the Flathead River may increase and result in increased noise along the river corridor.

Land use will not change, as the site has been historically available for public access.

The FWP Region 1 Weed Management Plan calls for an integrated method of managing weeds, including the use of herbicides. The use of herbicides would be in compliance with application guidelines and conducted by people trained in safe handling techniques. Weeds would also be controlled using mechanical or biological means in certain areas to reduce the risk of chemical spills or water contamination.

The site distance on the east entrance to the proposed FAS is short, due to the curvature of Highway 200. Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT) is planning a highway project for Highway 200, and it is likely the entrances to this site will change as a result of the MDOT work. Temporary barriers will ensure safe ingress and egress from the site.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks pays taxes "in a sum equal to the amount of taxes which would be payable on county assessment were it taxable to a private citizen" (MCA 87-1-603). Therefore, there will be no effect of this action on the local tax base.

The funding source for this acquisition shall be the Fishing Access Acquisition Fund (\$170,000).

It would cost approximately \$1,000 per year to maintain this site, including road, fences, and weed control.

The proposed FAS will increase the quality and quantity of tourism on the lower Flathead River. Since the site was closed, there has been no direct public access

to the lower Flathead River. Anglers may arrive at the lower Flathead River by following motorboat restrictions from the upstream Flathead Indian Reservation. Anglers may also have access to the lower Flathead River via FASs on the Clark Fork River; however, a rapid at the mouth of the Flathead River prohibits upstream motor boat passage much of the year. The proposed FAS would be a prime location for hunters, anglers, and recreationists throughout the year. This location would replace public access to the Flathead River that was lost in 2003. Acquisition of the property by MFWP would enhance public access to the river and provide parking and boat launching opportunities.

Before construction, MFWP would identify any heritage properties that are located within the area affected by a proposed project and shall consult with the SHPO regarding how to address any impacts the project would have on any cultural site.

The acquisition of property is not a project or undertaking as defined by MFWP cultural resource policy enacted under the State Antiquities Act.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

This analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment. The site has been used in the past for public launching, and this action would restore that use.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Describe the level of public involvement for this project, if any, and given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The public will be notified in the following ways to comment on the EA of the Lower Flathead River FAS Acquisition:

- 1. Legal notices will be published in the Kalispell *Daily Inter Lake*, the *Helena Independent Record*, the *Missoulian*, and the *Sanders County Ledger*.
- 2. Legal notice and the draft EA will be posted on the Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks web site: http://fwp.state.mt.us/publicnoticesT
- 3. A public meeting will be held in the Perma area if there is sufficient public interest or controversy.

This level of public involvement is appropriate for a project of this small scale.

2. Duration of comment period, if any:

The public comment period will be 30 days, from July 20 through August 19, 2005. Comments may be e-mailed to jvashro@mt.gov, or written comments may be sent to the following address:

Jim Vashro, Fisheries Manager MFWP Region One 490 North Meridian Road Kalispell, MT 59901

UUUUUUUUPART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? No. If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action; therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

2. Name, title, address, and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Allan Kuser MFWP FAS Coordinator 1420 East Sixth Avenue Helena, MT 59601 (406) 444-7885 Jim Vashro MFWP Reg. 1 Fisheries Manager 490 North Meridian Road Kalispell, MT 59901 (406) 751-4550 Sally Schrank Independent Contractor 112 Riverview C Great Falls, MT 59404 (406) 268-0527

3. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Parks Division

Wildlife Division Fisheries Division Lands Section

Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System

PART VI. MEPA CHECKLIST

earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or

other natural hazard?

f. Other

Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT **IMPACT** 1. LAND RESOURCES Potentially Will the proposed action result in: Can Impact Be Comment Unknown None Minor Significant Mitigated Index a. Soil instability or changes in geologic Χ 1a. substructure? b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, Χ compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility? c. Destruction, covering or modification of any Χ unique geologic or physical features? d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion Χ patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake? e. Exposure of people or property to Χ

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1a. Since this site already exists, soil compaction is already evident. A temporary port-a-potty would improve current conditions.

Χ

2. AIR		IM				
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))		Х				2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		Х				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		Х				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		Х				
e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		N/A				
f. Other		Х				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2a. Use of the site will be consistent with past uses, hence there will be no change in air quality.

3. WATER		IM				
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		Х				3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		Х				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		Х				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		Х				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		Х				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		Х				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		Х				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		Х				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		Х				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		Х				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		Х				
I. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		N/A				
m. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		N/A				
n. Other:		Х				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3a. Use of the site will be consistent with past uses, hence there will be no change in water quality.

4. VEGETATION		IN				
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		Х				
b. Alteration of a plant community?		Х				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		Х				4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		Х				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			Х		X	4e.
f. <u>For P-R/D- J</u> , will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		N/A				
g. Other:		Х				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 4c. The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) found records of Sand Springbeauty *Claytonia* arenicola within one mile of the site. The US Forest Service ranks this vascular plant as sensitive. The plant was located at the Cascade Creek campground and along Robertson Creek.
- 4e. The Howe property has a minor infestation of spotted knapweed (5% coverage), and the current owners have not had an active weed management program. If MFWP acquires the land, the department would incorporate this property into Region One's weed management program. The FWP Region One Weed Management Plan calls for an integrated method of managing weeds using mechanical, biological, and chemical eradication procedures. Increased use at the site may lead to increased weed infestations; however, the implementation of a weed management program will mitigate this risk. Aquatic weeds are present in Coeur d'Alene, only 125 miles from the site. Signing regarding aquatic weeds and activities to prevent their spread will be posted on site.

5. FISH/WILDLIFE		IM				
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		Х				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		Х				5b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		Х				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		Х				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		Х				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		Х				5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		Х				
h. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		N/A				
i. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		N/A				
j. Other:		Х				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 5b. The proposed FAS is a good access point to lands located across the Flathead River. One of the main uses in the fall will be to allow hunters who have permits to hunt bighorn sheep on the north side of the Flathead River. A private property owner has allowed access through his property to hunting district 124 and will likely do so in the future. This hunt allows for either-sex and adult ewe bighorn sheep licenses with a season from mid-September through mid-November.
- 5f. The MNHP located bull trout *Salvelinus confluentus*, peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus*, North American Wolverine *Gulo gulo luscus*, and Lynx *Lynx Canadensis* within one mile of this property. Since the property has historically been used for public access, this action should have no additional impacts on these species.

Bull trout use the Flathead River solely as a migration corridor between rearing grounds and spawning grounds. Juvenile and adult bull trout would not use the lower portion of the Flathead River as temperatures are too warm in the summer. Bull trout would not be impacted by this action as catching a bull trout in the Lower Flathead River is highly unlikely and no habitat will be altered by this purchase.

There is a peregrine falcon nest immediately downstream of the proposed FAS on the north side of the river. Since the property has historically been used for public access, this action should provide no additional impacts on the nesting pair. Should further development at the FAS occur, MFWP will consider impacts on this nest in a future EA.

Wolverine and lynx are typically upper elevation species, have not been located in the immediate area of the potential FAS, and are not expected to be there. There will be no impact on these species.

Bald eagles occur in the area of the proposed FAS. The nearest nest is approximately 3.5 map miles (straight line distance). There will be no impacts on this nest or on bald eagle habitat. Guidelines established in the FWP Bald Eagle Management Plan will be followed.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS		IN				
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			Х			6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		Х				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		Х				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		Х				
e. Other:		Х				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. Public access has historically been available at this site, but with the acquisition by MFWP, that access will be formalized. Noise caused by increased recreational use may occur. The purpose of the site is for launching boats. Other recreational uses will be minimal due to the size (2.08 acres) and location of the site. Therefore noise at the site will be minimal and not likely a nuisance to neighbors. Motor boat traffic on the lower portion of the Flathead River may increase and result in increased noise along the river corridor.

7. LAND USE		IN				
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown∋	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		Х				7a.
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		Х				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		Х				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		Х				
e. Other:		Х				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7a. As the site has been historically available for public access, land use will not change.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	1					1
8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>		IN				
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			Х		Yes	8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		Х				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		Х				
d. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		N/A				
e. Other:		Х				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8a. The FWP Region 1 Weed Management Plan calls for an integrated method of managing weeds, including the use of herbicides. The use of herbicides would be in compliance with application guidelines and conducted by people trained in safe handling techniques. Weeds would also be controlled using mechanical or biological means in certain areas to reduce the risk of chemical spills or water contamination.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT		IN				
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		Х				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		Х				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		Х				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		Х				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			Х			9e.
f. Other:		Х				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9e. The site distance on the east entrance to the proposed FAS is short, due to the curvature of Highway 200. Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT) is planning a highway project for Highway 200, and it is likely the entrances to this site will change as a result of the MDOT work. Temporary barriers will ensure safe ingress and egress from the site.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES		IN				
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		Х				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		Х				10b.
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		Х				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		Х				
e. Define projected revenue sources						10e.
f. Define projected maintenance costs.						10f
g. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 10b. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks pays taxes "in a sum equal to the amount of taxes which would be payable on county assessment were it taxable to a private citizen" (MCA 87-1-603). Therefore, there will be no effect of this action on the local tax base.
- 10e. The funding source for this acquisition shall be the Fishing Access Acquisition Fund (\$170,000).
- 10f. It would cost approximately \$1,000 per year to maintain this site, including road, fences, and weed control.

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION		IN				
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		Х				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		Х				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			Х			11c.
d. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		N/A				
e. Other:		N/A				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11c. The proposed FAS will increase the quality and quantity of tourism on the lower Flathead River. Since the site was closed, there has been no direct public access to the lower Flathead River. Anglers may arrive at the lower Flathead River by following motorboat restrictions from the upstream Flathead Indian Reservation. Anglers may also have access to the lower Flathead River via FASs on the Clark Fork River; however, a rapid at the mouth of the Flathead River prohibits upstream motor boat passage much of the year. The proposed FAS would be a prime location for hunters, anglers, and recreationists throughout the year. This location would replace public access to the Flathead River that was lost in 2003. Acquisition of the property by MFWP would enhance public access to the river and provide parking and boat launching opportunities.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES		IN				
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		Х				12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		Х				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		Х				
d. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)		N/A				12d.
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 12a. Before construction, MFWP would identify any heritage properties that are located within the area affected by a proposed project and shall consult with the SHPO regarding how to address any impacts the project would have on any cultural site.
- 12d. The acquisition of property is not a project or undertaking as defined by MFWP cultural resource policy enacted under the State Antiquities Act.

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF</u> SIGNIFICANCE		IN				
Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		Х				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		Х				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		Х				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		Х				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		Х				
f. <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		N/A				
g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		N/A				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

APPENDIX 1

23-1-110 MCA EXEMPTION FORM Lower Flathead River FAS Acquisition

Use this form when a park improvement or development project meets the criteria identified in 12.8.602 (1) ARM, but determined to NOT significantly change park features or use patterns.

State Park or Fishing Access Site Project Description

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to purchase the Howe property (2.08 acres) using funds from the Fishing Access Acquisition Fund, for the purpose of creating an additional Fishing Access Site on the Flathead River.

The project does not significantly change park or fishing access site features or use patterns.

Reason for exemption is provided across from the appropriate item below.

12.8.602 (ARM) (1)	Reason for Exemption
(a) Roads/trails	No new roads/trails
(b) Buildings	No new buildings
(c) Excavation	None
(d) Parking	No new parking
(e) Shoreline alterations	None
(f) Construction into water bodies	None
(g) Construction w/impacts on cultural artifacts	None
(h) Underground utilities	No new utilities
(i) Campground expansion	None - day use only

Some activities	considere	d that do no	t significar	ntly impac	ct site featu	ires or use	patterns
include signing	fencing, b	arriers, road	d grading,	garbage	collection,	and routine	maintenance

Signature	(Sally Schrank	<u>) </u>	June 4, 2005